CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Wednesday, 18 February 1970, at 3.0 p.m.

Chairman: Mrs. A. MYRDAL (Sweden)

(Previous verbatim records in this series appeared under the symbols ENDC/PV.1-ENDC/PV.430).

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Argentina:	Mr. C. ORTIZ de ROZAS
	Mr. V.E. BERASATEGUI
Brazil:	Mr. R.E. SARAIVA GUERREIRO
	Mr. P. CABRAL de MELLO
	Mr. E. HERMANNY
Bulgaria:	Mr. K. CHRISTOV
	Mr. T. PETROV
	Mr. D. STAMBOLIEV
	Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV
Burma:	U CHIT MYAING
	U MAUNG MAUNG GYI
Canada:	Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
	Mr. R.W. CLARK
	Mr. J.R. MORDEN
Czechoslovakia:	Mr. T. LAHODA
	Mr. J. STRUCKA
Ethiopia:	Mr. A. ZELLEKE
	Mr. G.C. ALULA
Hungary:	Mr. I. KOMIVES
	Mr. J. PETRAN
India:	Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
	Mr. N. KRISHNAN
	Mr. K.P. JAIN
Italy:	Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
	Mr. F.L. OTTIERI
	Mr. R. BORSARELLI
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Japan:	Mr. I. ABE
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	Mr. Y. TSUZUKI
	Mr. J. SAKAMOTO
Mexico:	Mr. A. GARCIA ROBLES
	Mr. M. TELLO
Mongolia:	Mr. D. ERDENBILEG
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Netherlands:	Mr. H.F. ESCHAUZIER
	Mr. E. BOS
Nigeria:	Alhaji SULE KOLO
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Pakistan:	Mr. K. AHMED
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	Mr. T.O. HYDER
Poland:	Mr. W. NATORF
	Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI
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Under Secretary-General Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva:	Mr. W. WINSPEARE GUICCIARDI
Assistant Director-General:	Mr. G. PALTHEY

1. The CHAIRMAN (Sweden): I declare open the 450th plenary meeting of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament.

2. It is a very great honour and privilege for us -- and for me particularly in my capacity as Chairman of the Committee at this meeting -- to greet today the Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant. His devotion to world peace is universally acknowledged. His deep interest in disarmament has been manifested many times before. It seems particularly fitting to refer to the chapter on disarmament contained in the Introduction to his last Annual Report to the General Assembly (A/7601/Add.1, paras.26-46). He there illuminated in an admirable way the main issues confronting Member States in the fields of arms regulation and disarmament.

3. Today we have yet another example of this interest of yours, Mr. Secretary-General. You have taken time out of your strenuous and heavy time-table in order to be able personally to address this Committee at a time when we are embarking on a new important phase of our work, the session of 1970, opening up the challenging 1970s -- the Disarmament Decade. I wish to assure you of the appreciation of all delegations of this initiative of yours. I wish also to assure you that we shall all listen with the utmost attention to what you have to say. You are in a unique position to judge and evaluate what the world needs in the way of further agreements to limit and to halt the arms race. We are certain to benefit from your guidance, now as so many times before.

4. I now call upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

5. The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First of all I should like to express to you, Madam Chairman, my very sincere thanks for your very kind references to me, and for your gracious introduction.

6. It is a genuine pleasure for me to be present with you today, if only for a very brief time. I had the privilege of addressing you in person in 1962 at the beginning of the work of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament. At that time I expressed my conviction that on the constitutional side the Conference was the best equipped one ever to deal with the problem of disarmament; that the institution of the co-Chairmanship provided an effective means for substantive as well as procedural direction for the work; and that the presence of the non-aligned States enabled them to exercise their catalytic and moderating influences in helping to achieve agreement. I am very glad on this occasion to pay tribute to the Eighteen-Nation

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Committee on Disarmament and to the success of its endeavours in having produced a number of important agreements in the field of disarmament. I am happy also to welcome the new members of the Committee, whose participation has already contributed to the strengthening of the work and effectiveness of the enlarged Conference.

7. The year 1970 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations. It also marks the first year of the Disarmament Decade declared by the United Nations (resolution 2602 E (XXIV); CCD/275). This reconvened session of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, which is the first disarmament meeting since the declaration of the General Assembly, provides an appropriate occasion to launch the Disarmament Decade. In view of the importance of this meeting I decided to come in person to address the Conference.

8. The nineteen-sixties saw a number of solid achievements in the field of disarmament. On the eve of that decade, in 1959, the Antarctic Treaty[1/] was signed. In the same year the General Assembly also adopted unanimously the resolution establishing general and complete disarmament under effective international control (resolution 1378 (XIV)) as our goal. In 1961 the Soviet Union and the United States succeeded in working out the Joint Statement of Agreed Principles for Disarmament Negotiations (ENDC/5). The Agreed Principles were welcomed by the General Assembly and recommended by it as the basis for negotiations on general and complete disarmament by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (resolution 1660 (XVI)).

9. In 1963 the Soviet Union and the United States agreed at Geneva, in the context of the disarmament discussions on reducing the risk of war by miscalculation or accident, to the establishment of a direct communications link between Moscow and Washington (ENDC/97). In that year too the Treaty banning nuclear weapons tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water (ENDC/100/Rev.1) was signed. In the same year the General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution (resolution 1884 (XVIII)) banning nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction from outer space. That ban was expanded and embodied in the outer-space Treaty of 1967 (resolution 2222 (XXI)). In 1967 there was also signed the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (ENDC/186). In 1968 the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (ENDC/226*) was opened for signature.

1/ United Nations Treaty Series, Vol.402, p.71.

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10. All those agreements are noteworthy successes which constitute initial but very important steps towards disarmament. As I noted in the Introduction to my annual report last September (A/7601/Add.1, para.40) there were also, however, some adverse developments during the 1960s. In 1962 world expenditure for military purposes was estimated to total $120,000 million. In 1969 the estimate of total military expenditures had increased to the alarming figure of nearly $200,000 million. This unproductive and wasteful diversion of the world's resources and energy exacted a heavy toll on the living conditions of the peoples of the world in both the developing and the developed countries. I also noted that the world was at a critical crossroads where there was a real danger of a fearful new upward spiral in the "mad momentum" of the nuclear arms race. The issue still hangs in the balance.

11. During the very last months of 1969 several positive events occurred which could be of the greatest significance for the 1970s and give even now some measure of encouragement. The Soviet Union and the United States opened their preliminary bilateral strategic arms limitation talks in Helsinki. According to reports they made a hopeful start and agreed that the substantive negotiations should begin in Vienna in April. The General Assembly, conscious of the great importance of these talks, welcomed them and appealed to the Governments of the two Powers to agree as an urgent preliminary measure on a moratorium on further testing and deployment of new offensive and defensive strategic nuclear weapon systems (resolution 2602 A (XXIV)).

12. Support for the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons received new stimulus at the end of 1969 and at the beginning of 1970 by several important new signatures and ratifications. As a result I feel confident that we can look forward to the entry into force of the Treaty in the very near future.

13. Some progress was made on the question of banning the use of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, and the urgent need to ban their development, production and stockpiling was recognized. Also, for the first time, the nations of the world declared and dedicated a decade for disarmament in a desire to mobilize and organize all efforts for the earliest possible achievement of concrete measures towards general and complete disarmament.

14. The twenty-fourth session of the General Assembly made considerable progress in dealing with the four disarmament items on its agenda. It adopted a record number of twelve resolutions in this field, all of which are before you (CCD/275). The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament has been charged with a number of urgent and

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vital tasks, and the resolutions provide a renewed mandate and framework for your work. With the reconvening of the Conference, which constitutes the greatest and most representative concentration of expertise in the field of disarmament, the opportunity has arrived for concrete and measurable progress in a number of directions.

15. The Conference is seized of four draft treaties or conventions on three questions of major concern: on the prevention of an arms race on the sea-bed and ocean floor (CCD/269/Rev.1); on the prohibition of chemical and biological weapons (A/7655; ENDC/255); and on banning underground nuclear weapon tests (ENDC/242).

16. The elaboration and submission to the General Assembly of an agreed draft treaty on the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof would constitute an important step in preventing the danger of the spread of the nuclear arms race to a vast area of our planet. Such a treaty would take its rightful and honoured place with the Antarctic Treaty, the outer space Treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the non-proliferation Treaty in reducing the areas of the world and the surrounding environment which are subject to the nuclear threat. I am convinced that with mutual accommodation and compromise it will be possible to reach agreement on a draft treaty for the sea-bed in a relatively short time.

17. Regarding the prohibition of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons, I would like to underline here the General Assembly's invitation to all States which have not yet done so to accede to or ratify the Geneva Protocol in the course of the present year in commemoration of the forty-fifth anniversary of its signing and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations (resolution 2603 B (XXIV)). I am hopeful that the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament will be able to report to the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly substantial progress on all aspects of the problem of the elimination of these horror weapons.

18. It has often been emphasized that there is a relationship between the bilateral negotiations on strategic arms limitation and the question of an underground nuclear test ban. There is, however, room for much useful work by the Conference in exploring and elaborating the provisions of a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. I am hopeful that the results of the inquiry I am conducting at the request of the General Assembly in connexion with a world-wide exchange of seismological data (resolution 2604 A (XXIV)) will facilitate the achievement of a comprehensive test ban and that the special report

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called for by the General Assembly will mark definite major progress towards banning underground tests. In the meantime I would like to re-emphasize the General Assembly's call to all States which have not done so to adhere to the existing partial test-ban Treaty, and its call to all nuclear-weapon States to suspend nuclear-weapon tests in all environments (resolution 2604 B (XXIV)).

19. The General Assembly has requested the Conference to consider for the first time some new problems of a scientific and technological nature concerning radiological methods of warfare (resolution 2602 C (XXIV)) and the possible military applications of laser technology (resolution 2602 D (XXIV)). In recent years some delegations at the General Assembly have drawn attention to the possible military applications of the gas centrifuge method of producing enriched uranium, and I myself have become concerned about the implications of this development. I would accordingly venture to suggest that perhaps the time may have arrived for the Conference to consider also this area of technological research and development.

20. Finally, in connexion with the Disarmament Decade, the General Assembly has requested the Conference to work out a comprehensive programme dealing with all aspects of the problem of the cessation of the arms race and general and complete disarmament under effective international control which would provide the Conference with a guide-line to chart the course of its further work and its negotiations (resolution 2602 E (XXIV)) Elements of such a programme already exist in the two drafts of treaties for general and complete disarmament presented in 1962 by the Soviet Union (ENDC/2/Rev.1) and the United States (ENDC/30 and Add. 1-3), in the provisional agenda (ENDC/236, p.3) adopted by the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament in August 1968, and in resolution C adopted by the Conference of Non-Nuclear Weapon States in September 1968 (A/7277, pp.6-7).

21. It was not, of course, the intention of the General Assembly to delay or postpone the achievement of disarmament agreements to the latter years of the Disarmament Decade. On the contrary, it was the desire of the Members of the United Nations to emphasize the need for early and continuous action, to hasten progress and to maintain and increase the momentum of the achievements of the decade of the 1960s.

22. There are sound reasons for thinking this is indeed possible. The prospects for the early entry into force of the non-proliferation Treaty are most encouraging, and I would like to reiterate my appeal to all countries to sign and ratify the Treaty at the earliest possible date. The hopeful start of the strategic arms limitation

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talks may presage progress in this vital field. I believe we can look forward this year to an agreed draft treaty for the denuclearization of the sea-bed and ocean floor. There are good possibilities for further ratifications and accessions to the Geneva Protocol of 1925 (A/7575, p.117) and for advancing the cause of the elimination of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons. Progress can also be made towards facilitating a comprehensive nuclear-weapon test ban. While I am fully conscious of the difficulties involved in working out a comprehensive programme relating to the Disarmament Decade, I am fully confident that, if members of the Conference apply themselves urgently to this task, they will be able to report an agreed programme to the twenty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

23. It has been said that the bilateral strategic arms limitation talks are the most important international negotiations since the Second World War (A/C.1/PV.1691, provisional, p.3). Progress in those talks will undoubtedly have a most important bearing on all of the work of the Committee on Disarmament. I believe that if the two parties could agree, pursuant to the appeal of the General Assembly, to a moratorium on the further testing and deployment of new offensive and defensive strategic nuclear-weapon systems, this would be the single most important first step to prevent the escalation of the nuclear arms race. It would constitute a break-through in disarmament negotiations and would have an immeasurable beneficial effect on all aspects of disarmament and indeed for world peace.

24. It is evident that there is an inevitable interrelationship and interaction among the bilateral talks, the negotiations in the 26-member Conference, and the work of the 126 Members of the General Assembly. My presence at your Conference today is an indication of my belief that the Conference has a most important role to play in the unceasing pursuit of disarmament. But I must reiterate here what I have previously urged, namely that serious attempts should be made to obtain the participation of all the nuclear Powers in all efforts for disarmament. The active co-operation of all of them is essential for a full measure of success.

25. The nations of the world, and particularly those participating in the bilateral talks and in the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, have what may be a unique opportunity in this year 1970 to launch the Disarmament Decade on a successful course and to mark an historic turning-point in the long struggle for international peace and security.

26. THE CHAIRMAN (Sweden): Mr. Secretary-General, on behalf of the whole Committee, as well as specifically on behalf of the two co-Chairmen, I wish to thank you warmly both for your having come here to us and for your intervention. We have listened with the utmost care to your remarks. We shall keep them in our minds and in our hearts as we continue our efforts to make this year's session of the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament a meaningful and a successful one. Thank you very much.

27. I now declare the public part of this meeting closed.

The meeting was suspended at 3.34 p.m. and resumed at 3.38 p.m.

28. The CHAIRMAN (Sweden): I declare open the private part of our meeting.

29. I am the only speaker inscribed on the list, in my capacity as representative of Sweden.

30. Once again our Committee is taking up its vital task of trying to arrive at meaningful international agreements in the fields of arms regulation and disarmament. Once again world public opinion for a moment has its attention drawn to our existence, and expectations are raised that our work will make at least a dent in the otherwise so unpromising picture of world armaments.

31. The representatives of the United States, the Soviet Union and Mexico yesterday indicated the priorities of their respective Governments. Today the Secretary-General of the United Nations has given us very valuable suggestions. These interventions will have to be studied carefully by us all before comments can be made on them in any detail.

32. My intention today is to present in a general way how my delegation sees the Committee's task at this stage, and to try to make some concrete suggestions as to what might be some first steps in the Committee's attack on the problems which are foremost on our agenda.

33. The debate on disarmament at the last session of the United Nations General Assembly was a vivid one and on the whole a very constructive one. It is most important that we do not now lose momentum, all the more since we had in one resolution a particularly challenging call for action, namely the decision, mentioned also by the Secretary-General, contained in resolution 2602 E (XXIV) (CCD/275) to declare the decade of the 1970s as a Disarmament Decade. But if the idea of the Disarmament Decade is to have any real meaning and not in the end be described as empty rhetoric, Member Governments and particularly the members of this Committee must make very earnest, very tenaciously sustained and very well planned efforts.

(The Chairman, Sweden)

34. A first prerequisite is a sharp increase in the productivity of the Committee. Some very useful results have been obtained through efforts in this body in the past, but the rate at which these have been achieved has been slow. Agreements, ready to enter into force, have been few and far between. A much quicker pace is needed if we are to meet the challenge of the 1970s.

35. At the beginning of last year's session we had a useful discussion on procedures. Few changes resulted, however. One new feature, which was used with some success, was the holding of several informal meetings of the whole Committee. We should, in the view of my delegation, definitely maintain the possibility of discussing more freely than is usually the case at the formal meetings both procedural questions and matters of substance. But, of course, informal meetings also should be well prepared. Delegations, working individually or co-operatively, could more frequently submit draft texts or similar working papers to serve as building elements in our attempts to construct new disarmament agreements.

36. Such co-operative efforts have occurred in relation to the item which now seems most ready for immediate action, namely a treaty on the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the sea-bed and the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof (CCD/269/Rev.1). True, a number of working documents with suggestions as to changes in and amendments to the draft treaty were submitted as late as in the First Committee of the General Assembly when this item was discussed there. It would seem a waste of time to repeat this same discussion here.

37. I would therefore suggest that a working group, however informal, be created, consisting of the main authors of the draft: that is, the representatives of the United States and the Soviet Union, as well as representatives of all the delegations which submitted working papers in New York. Any other delegation should, however, be free to send representatives to the meetings of the working group and partake of its deliberations. Such a working group would, I suggest, hold informal meetings, the purpose of which would be to arrive at a more definite treaty text, acceptable to all delegations. If this suggestion were adopted, we might devote the formal meetings of the Committee to other subjects in the meantime; and the sea-bed treaty would come before the Committee later when the working group had accomplished its task. We also have to keep in mind that co-ordination will be needed with the Sea-Bed Committee, which is meeting again in March. It seems to me that the whole fate of the sea-bed denuclearization treaty hinges on our coming to a consensus with that other Committee before the two reports go to the General Assembly.

(The Chairman, Sweden)

38. It has often been stated in the past that the working methods of this body were supple and easily adjustable to fit our task. A proof of the soundness of this thesis would, I submit, be the acceptance of the procedure I have just outlined. If it were not adopted, my delegation, like, I suppose, all other delegations, would feel bound to repeat again what we said last year in this Committee as well as in the First Committee of the General Assembly in regard to the sea-bed treaty. Such a repetition could be of no advantage to anybody. It would certainly not further our task of arriving speedily at an agreed text.

39. Turning now to other subjects on the agenda, I would claim that on some of them there exists a similar risk of repetition. The views of my delegation, like those of others, have by now become so well known that it seems almost superfluous to reiterate them. A repetition might even lead to a blunting of the sharp sense of urgency and topicality which the subjects have in themselves.

40. The fact must be recognized that action by the Committee on several important items on its agenda has become somewhat blocked. Little or nothing can be obtained by a sterile re-rendering of past statements. An earnest effort must instead be made by everybody to seek new ways out. This is particularly true of the items which relate to nuclear arms. The comprehensive test ban, the cut-off of fissionable material for weapon purposes, the creation of nuclear-free zones — these are examples of items to which an impressive effort has been devoted in the past but without any new results becoming visible during the last two or three years.

41. And yet two important events, foreseen for the immediate future, could form a useful basis for renewed efforts. I am referring to the coming into force of the non-proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226*), which might take place — we understand — some time in March, and the second round of SALT (Strategic armament limitation talks), foreseen to start in Vienna on 16 April. Over and over again the obvious connexion between these developments and further progress towards nuclear disarmament has been stressed. The expectations of the non-nuclear-weapon States — whose accession to the non-proliferation Treaty has been an important measure of arms control — that the nuclear-weapon States should in their turn enter into meaningful obligations limiting their freedom of action in the field of nuclear weapons have not diminished during the prolonged period of waiting for the start of SALT or the entry into force of the non-proliferation Treaty.

(The Chairman, Sweden)

42. Recent action in the United Nations General Assembly has shown that practically all Member States understand the comprehensive test ban to be the most urgent measure for joint action by this Committee in the nuclear field. Our Committee will have to renew its efforts during this session to arrive at a treaty prohibiting underground nuclear-weapon tests. My delegation will, for its part, return to this subject in detail at a somewhat later stage. Already today I feel obliged, however, to remind my colleagues of one aspect of the present situation which seems particularly disturbing, namely that of radioactive leakages from underground nuclear explosions. The Yearbook on World Armaments and Disarmament which was published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) in November of last year contains some revealing figures in this respect. In a table on page 250 twenty-nine underground nuclear tests are listed which are reported to have "vented", thus having resulted in measurable atmospheric radioactivity. Of these, nineteen have occurred since the signing of the Moscow Treaty in 1963. In some of the tests which vented, the detectable amounts of radioactivity passed outside the nuclear-weapon country concerned. These constitute violations of the Moscow Treaty, which contains -- as is well known -- the prohibition of all nuclear explosions in any environment -

> "... if such explosion causes radioactive debris to be present outside the territorial limits of the State under whose jurisdiction or control such explosion is conducted." (ENDC/100/Rev.1, article I)

43. In connexion with that risk of radioactive debris not being contained within national borders, the preparations of the main nuclear-weapon Powers for megaton shots on island sites are particularly disturbing. The risks of venting must be considerable, and the spreading of radioactive fall-out outside national borders in such an event almost inevitable.

44. Several statements have been made here in the past drawing attention to this problem. A significant one is that contained in the Joint Memorandum on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty submitted to this Committee by its then eight non-aligned members in August 1968:

> "There have also been reports that large underground tests have led to leakages of radioactivity outside the territorial limits of testing States, thus causing infringements of the Partial Test Ban Treaty. Even if these incidents have not been deliberate, they may eventually lead to a weakening of the Partial Test Ban Treaty and even endanger its very existence." (ENDC/235, p.2)

Clearly any trend towards erosion of the Moscow Treaty must be stopped.

(The Chairman, Sweden)

45. Connected with this whole issue, and also with the non-proliferation Treaty, is another important task which has increased in urgency. I am thinking of the international agreement or agreements foreseen in article V of the non-proliferation Treaty and intended to deal in further detail with the possible utilization by all States of the technology of nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes. The technical aspects of this question are being dealt with within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as bilaterally in talks between the Governments of the Soviet Union and the United States. This Committee will need to be informed in a broad manner of these developments, and I should like to ask the Secretariat and the representatives of the Soviet Union and the United States to keep this wish in mind. More important, however, is the need for some action within our Committee on a policy problem: the content of an independent international instrument which would contain the rules for a non-discriminatory access by all States to the technology of nuclear explosions and a regulation of the utilization by any State of such nuclear explosions.

46. I suggest that it is high time that we start again a serious discussion on this matter. Someone might say that this is primarily a task for the IAEA, seized as it is with the technical aspects of the matter. In response I may, however, remind my fellow delegates of the wording of the resolution relating to nuclear explosions which was adopted at the last session of the General Assembly. In resolution 2605 B (XXIV) a well-deserved tribute is paid to the IAEA for its work in the technical field, and the Agency is asked to continue that work and to report on the progress of its further studies and activities to the Secretary-General of the United Nations not later than 1 October 1970. In a separate paragraph of the operative part of the resolution the Assembly notes, however,

> "... that the nature and contents of the special international agreement or agreements to be concluded pursuant to the provisions of article V of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, will remain open for appropriate consideration and will be the subject of further consultations" (para.7)

This consideration and these consultations could, in our opinion, most usefully be initiated in this body, which was the one responsible for the elaboration of the original draft treaty on non-proliferation. They would also fit in well with our further considerations of the vital test-ban issue.

(The Chairman, Sweden)

47. It might prove useful to conduct some informal group discussions also on this subject in order to work out some principles on which agreement could be sought and, even, at a later stage, common draft treaty texts. Some such procedure would save time and therefore be more conducive to results at this session.

48. I should like to say a few words also about nuclear-free zones and other regional disarmament measures. The whole world has noted with admiration the successful achievement of the nuclear-free zone in Latin America (ENDC/186). This development should encourage States of other regions to take similar action. In these most recent months we have witnessed some signs of a new interest in mutual and balanced reductions of military forces in Europe. If a dialogue on arms-control measures could be initiated, and continued, between the two military blocs in Europe, the possibilities of renewing past efforts to create within this continent a nuclear-free and/or otherwise regulated zone of arms limitation, or several such zones, would be increased. The neutral nations could then proceed to strengthen such arrangements by adhering to them if circumstances were suitable.

49. So far I have dealt with matters on our heavy agenda which might, in the view of my delegation, preferably be dealt with initially in informal working groups, so as to lay a better groundwork for definitive action. That leads naturally to the question, what should the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament then deal with in the formal meetings in the meantime? The answer is quite simple: it should take up either matters which seem ripe for action now or those on which we have to grope for a new approach. If the work of conciliation and compromise which I have mentioned as being needed in order to arrive at a generally-acceptable limited sea-bed treaty were to be rapidly successful, that item would of course come up in the Committee very soon.

50. The most obvious item for immediate concern is the issue of chemical and biological weapons. The Committee is faced with a clear mandate from the General Assembly to "give urgent consideration to reaching agreement on the prohibitions and other measures referred to in the draft conventions" (resolution 2603 B (XXIV)) which are already before it and other relevant proposals made during the United Nations debate. The Committee has also been requested "to submit a report on progress on all aspects of the problem of the elimination of chemical and bacteriological (biological) weapons to the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session". (ibid.)

(The Chairman, Sweden)

51. For several reasons this might be called our most urgent task. In the first place there is a new and spreading awareness of the threats which chemical and biological warfare poses to mankind, which has led governments to look anew at their policies in this field. A desire to reach further limitative international agreements has been clearly demonstrated, and the possibilities of positive results in any such endeavours therefore seem brighter now than earlier. The urgent need to curb the present arms race in this field need hardly be elaborated further. We also have available to us the report of the Secretary-General on Chemical and Bacteriological (Biological) Weapons and the Effects of Their Possible Use (A/7575). Its conclusions are clear and have been quoted many times both in this Committee and in the recent United Nations debate.

52. The SIPRI Yearbook, to which I referred earlier, also contains an interesting chapter on chemical and biological warfare. In this field, as in so many others, the information available to us is mostly about United States programmes. The only reason for this is, of course, that the United States is less secretive about its arsenal and development programmes than other major Powers. It is well known, mainly from outside sources, that these latter are carrying on similar work. SIPRI is now completing a separate study on this subject to be called "Chemical and Biological Warfare — Developments, Dangers and Disarmament Possibilities". I have been informed that a preliminary version of that study will be made available to representatives here in the very near future. As considerable work by several experts has been devoted to the study, it ought to provide us with some further good background material.

53. As the ban against the use of those weapons, as contained in the Geneva Protocol (A/7575, p. 117), was confirmed once again by the last session of the General Assembly, we can now proceed from there and concentrate on the prohibition of their development, production and stockpiling. The problems here are indeed formidable. I believe that we must now embark on a kind of new mapping expedition, using our formal sessions in the beginning to consider all possible approaches. True, we possess two draft conventions that have already been submitted, one on the prohibition of biological methods of warfare submitted by the United Kingdom delegation (ENDC/255/Rev.1), and the other on the prohibition of both chemical and bacteriological weapons submitted by the Soviet Union and eight other delegations to the United Nations General Assembly (A/7655). But before we enter into a detailed discussion of them we might take a good look around hoping to find further promising approaches or combinations. We should

(The Chairman, Sweden)

then also give attention to the problems connected with verification which might well turn out to be the most difficult.

54. This is, as we all know, the case with a number of arms-control and disarmament items. Consideration of several items simultaneously might be profitable if an exercise were undertaken with the goal of trying to arrive at more uniform conceptions as to the treatment of international verification problems. Personally, I am strongly convinced that this is an area where fresh thoughts and a free discussion might turn some particularly important keys.

55. I am bold enough to think the same about still another subject which delegations have earlier hesitated to tackle because of its particularly difficult and sensitive nature. I am hinting at the serious problems connected with the trade in arms. I am not ready at this stage to propose any specific manner in which the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament might tackle such a subject, still less to suggest any solutions. I only wanted to mention this item today as part of the general area which we cannot escape discussing if we are to strive in earnest towards the ultimate goal of our work -- general and complete disarmament.

56. It is a sad fact that military expenditures are generally rising the world over and that this has been accelerating recently. To an important extent the arms trade takes the form of proliferation of costly, sophisticated weapons. Competition by the supplier countries is furthermore often increased by a desire to seek political influence among the customers. A beginning towards restriction of the arms race, however, calls for regional considerations and soundings; but some of the general characters of the problems could well be aired in our body. The unbalanced arms race and the unbalanced arms trade are problems with which we must finally come to grips, because we have been asked by the General Assembly --

> "... to work out ... a comprehensive programme, dealing with all aspects of the problem of the cessation of the arms race and general and complete disarmament under effective international control" (resolution 2602 E (XXIV))

57. Our goals are set very high, and not much time is allotted to the world if it proceeds on its present course. Our task is to arrive quicker than hitherto at tangible results on specific measures. The Committee cannot afford to let this year go by without being able to show to the rest of the world some hopeful signs that man can become master of his death-machines.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Committee on Disarmament today held its 450th plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Mrs. Alva Myrdal, representative of Sweden.

"Statements were made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and by the Chairman.

"After conclusion of the open part of the meeting a statement was made by the representative of Sweden.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 19 February 1970, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.